

SPEECH

DELIVERED AT ST. ANDREWS,

FEBRUARY 7, A. D., 1887,

ON THE

RECORD OF THE TORY PARTY

BY

DR. SILAS ALWARD.

SAINT JOHN, N. B.
1887.

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Mr. Chairman, Electors of the County of Charlotte, Ladies and Gentlemen,—

For months this Dominion was kept in a state of suspense, whether the Royal prerogative would be exercised and Parliament dissolved, or whether it would be suffered to reach the prescribed limit of its existence by the effluxion of time. The one-man power at Ottawa seemed to be posing after the manner of the Royal Dane, and earnestly soliloquising whether it was better to be or not to be; whether it was nobler in the mind longer to bear the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, as he had borne them in the shape of bye and provincial elections, or take up arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them or himself, politically. He has at length decided to take up arms against a sea of troubles, beneath which I believe he will be deluged at the approaching election.

The issues now submitted to the people are far reaching, and by all odds more important than any they have yet been called upon to deal with. In their determination to a certain extent is involved the destiny of five millions of people. A crisis is reached. We must cry a halt to the course of reckless extravagance and unchecked corruption of the present Ministry, or pass with hasty steps upon a career of financial ruin and disintegration. Just emerging from the dark shadow of rebellion in the West, with a

fair province in the East clamoring for secession, and an unscrupulous ministry scattering the firebrands of religious bigotry and sectional hate to win a triumph at the polls, the outlook is anything but reassuring. Our only hope is in the speedy reversal of the policy that has unfortunately too long obtained.

On the first of July next we shall have been confederated twenty years. For fifteen of these years the Tory party has been in power. The five years of Liberal rule stand out clear and bright as an oasis in a wilderness of extravagance, corruption and taxation. I purpose in the first place briefly to consider some of the promises made and pledges given by the Conservatives in the past, and ask you to judge of them by the light of subsequent events.

During the years 1877-8 we were passing through one of those cycles of depression that coming unheralded periodically visit all countries. In our case it was aggravated by a succession of bad crops. The Tories, then out, prententiously claimed, they had a panacea, a sovereign remedy, for all our political ills. That with a wave of their wand commerce would flow in upon our shores and all the channels of trade overflow. That their policy, called national, meant no increase of the burdens of taxation—it was simply a re-adjustment of its incidence, with the avowed object of assisting certain struggling industries—only this and nothing more. The people accepted their pledges, believed in their fair promises, and restored them to power. They broke the word of promise to the hope; they did not even keep it to the ear. They at once, in defiance of their solemn promises, under their Tariff of 1879, increased the burden of taxation at an enormous rate—on some lines of goods twenty-five, thirty, forty, and even fifty and seventy-five per cent. In 1879 the duty collected on goods entered for consumption in the Dominion amounted to about thirteen millions of dollars. In 1881, when the Policy had been in force about two years, it amounted to eighteen millions and a half, an increase of nearly fifty per cent. Thus did they keep their promise of a simple re-adjustment and no increase of the burden of taxation.

In 1882 they again came before the people, one year before the expiry of Parliament by time. Their excuse was, foreign capitalists—to their personal knowledge, with millions upon millions

were waiting for the assurance that the National Policy was to become the settled, determined policy of the country, to pour in a golden stream for investment in manufacturing and industrial enterprises. The people, for a second time, took them at their word. Four years and more have since passed and the country has yet to learn that one dollar of these millions has sought the investment promised. Thus has an assurance, most emphatically given, been kept. Thus a promise fulfilled.

In 1880-1 when they introduced the Canada Pacific Railway resolutions in Parliament, the country stood appalled at the magnitude of the obligations to be undertaken by the Government in the construction of that work. In addition to the enormous subsidies of money and land given the syndicate they were to complete the line from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg, and construct the most difficult portions through the Rocky Mountains. Sir John and Sir Charles, however, quieted the fears of the people by the promise, that the road would be completed without adding a single dollar to the burden of taxation. The road would be completed, they said, with an actual cash outlay of about fifty-three millions of dollars by the people of the Dominion; yet by that time more than sufficient would be realized from the sales of lands in the North West to recoupe all this expenditure. They went into the most elaborate calculations to show the correctness of their estimate. They estimated by the time the road would be completed, about sixty millions of dollars would be realized from the sale of our public lands. Sir John predicted by this year of grace, 1887, there would be half a million of people in the North West. Again the people, through their representatives in Parliament, confided in the pledges and believed the promises of those who spoke smooth things yet prophesied deceits.

In 1883 Sir Charles found it necessary to modify these predictions. Finding the sale of public lands was not realizing expectation, he proposed to recoupe the fifty-three millions by the sale of lands and surpluses—this being the year of the enormous surplus of seven millions. In a speech delivered in Parliament, found in the Hansard of 1883 at page 976, he is thus reported:—"It will be remembered that my right hon. friend (Sir John) made a computation of what would be received in connection with the

What about the estimate of Sir Charles as to land sales? After deducting the costs of survey and management, not one dollar has been realized with which to recoupe the enormous expenditure of not fifty-three millions, but seventy millions, it has cost the people of this Dominion in hard cash to construct this railway. The receipts from Dominion lands in 1885 were but \$393,618, while the expenditure was \$482,316, showing a deficit on the year's business in lands of \$88,701. And this is the way the seventy millions are to be recouped in the sales of lands and surpluses. How much longer will a too confiding people follow such blind guides? What faith, I ask, then can you have in the pledges and promises of such men? And mark you, these are the men, who, in pre-confederation days, predicted in glowing terms such glorious things for us. Among them the man, who assured us under confederation we, of the Maritime Provinces, would manufacture for the west; that we would cease to be hewers of wood and drawers of water; that real estate would double in value in St. John; that our young men would be kept at home and constant employment found for all; that our city at the mouth of the St. John would become the Liverpool of British America, and that for twenty-five years the affairs of the Dominion would be managed at an outlay of but two dollars and seventy-five cents per head of its population. Twenty of these twenty-five years have come and gone and how stands the case?

The people by the sea do not manufacture for the west. Our young men have not been kept at home. Saint John, so far from being the Liverpool of British America, has decreased in population; trade has sadly fallen off; Real Estate has depreciated fully fifty per cent. The affairs of the Dominion have not been carried on at an outlay of two dollars and seventy-five cents per head, but an outlay of more than six dollars per head has already been reached. And yet for telling you these facts, we are to be denounced as disloyal; for telling the truth to be charged with running down the country. Not we are running down the country; but they, the Government of the day, by their ill-advised policy, reckless extravagance, and maladministration, are not only running down, but ruining the country.

The debt of the Dominion has reached such an appalling magni-

tude as must needs give us pause. At Confederation our gross debt was \$93,000,000; it is now \$281,000,000, or more than three-fold greater. At Confederation our annual expenditure was \$13,500,000; last year it was \$39,000,000, an increase of nearly three-fold. While our debt has increased over three hundred per cent, our population has increased not over thirty-five per cent. Take a like period in the earlier years of the history of the United States and note the contrast. In 1791 their debt was \$75,000,000; after the lapse of twenty years it was reduced to \$53,000,000. In 1791 their annual expenditure was \$8,000,000; twenty years after it had been increased by only \$500,000. But in the meantime their population had increased from 3,900,000 to 7,250,000, or nearly doubled. At the time of Confederation the debt of the United States was \$2,503,151,211. During twenty years it has been reduced to \$1,274,723,153, or nearly one-half; while ours has been more than trebled. Can such things be and not give us cause for anxious concern? The Minister of Marine and Fisheries pooh-poohs at our solicitude in this matter of the public debt. But I fear he is a blind guide. Finance, evidently, is not his forte. In all these questions he is evidently an indifferent scholar. It has taken him three months, with all the enlightenment we could impart, to learn that the net debt of this Dominion is not \$196,000,000, but over \$220,000,000. In Fredericton, on the 14th of October, 1886, he said, in a speech reported and published by the Tories of York, and now used by them for campaign purposes:—"I am here as a Minister of the Crown, standing on this platform, prepared to state to you that the gross debt of Canada to-day is no greater than \$264,000,000 in round numbers." He then claims that \$68,000,000 of assets are to come off this gross debt, leaving a net debt of \$196,000,000. At Halifax he is reported in the *Herald*, a Tory organ as saying:—"But I say that on the 30th day of September, 1886, the gross debt was no greater than it was in July, 1885, by no more than \$100,000, that is to say, to-day, in round numbers, the gross debt is \$264,000,000." He then proceeds to deduct the assets of \$68,000, leaving the net debt \$196,000,000, evidently intending to convey the impression this was the amount of the net debt at the time he was making the speech. Why did he suppress the

fact, for he knew it or should have known it, that on the first day of May, 1886, see Hansard, 1886, page 1076, Mr. Charleton rose in his place in Parliament and asked the Minister of Finance, Mr. McLellan: 1st, The gross debt; 2nd, The net debt of the Dominion. And Mr. McLellan replied: The gross debt was \$281,433,629 and the net debt \$205,569,263. Oh but, says the minister, what about the \$20,000,000 cash paid by the Syndicate? This will reduce the gross debt by \$20,000,000, and bring it to my figure of say \$264,000,000. Well, if you deduct it from the gross debt you must likewise deduct it from the assets, leaving them at \$48,000,000 and not \$68,000,000. For this debt having been secured by mortgage on the road formed an item of the assets. He either knew what he stated to be false or sought by a species of sophistry to so mix and muddle the figures as to make it appear, our net debt at that time was only \$196,000,000. I care not which horn of the dilemma he takes. After having been subjected to merciless criticism; after having been ridiculed from one end of the Dominion to the other on his elaborate calculations to prove the net debt; after Mr. Blake had given his figures and shown that with the \$10,000,000 owed by the syndicate and paid in waste lands and the further addition of a large part of the past year's deficit, the net debt amounted to more than \$220,000,000, and not \$196,000,000, as declared, we find this heaven-born financier saying, in a speech delivered at Collina, on the 28th day of January, 1887, as reported in the *Sun* of the 31st of January, 1887:—"The present net debt is about \$220,000,000." As a Minister of the Crown he knew, three months ago, what the net debt was. Why did he withhold the fact from the people? Why did he attempt so to mystify his statements and so muddle his figures as to convey the impression, the then net debt was \$196,000,000, and not \$220,000,000, which he since has been compelled to admit? At that time his admirers may have claimed he scored a point. His statements may have elicited cheers. Such triumphs at best, however, are short-lived and rather injure than help a cause.

The Government of the day is now on its trial. It appeals to its record and claims acquittal. By its record, I contend, it should be condemned, and that without mercy. It should be condemned for its reckless extravagance, as evidenced by increasing the con-

trollable expenditure from \$6,542,000 in 1878, to \$12,600,000 in 1885, or nearly double what it was at the former period. It should be condemned for its corruption in contracting, if not directly, at least indirectly, with members of Parliament, and for subsidizing railways in which members of Parliament—aye, members of the Cabinet—have a direct pecuniary interest. It should be condemned for its shameless abuse of the Superannuation Act, and crowding the public offices with the relatives of ministers.

I pass all these and shall proceed to consider, somewhat at length, two other grounds of condemnation, either of which is sufficient to consign them to the merited punishment of dismissal. The first of these is the aggressive policy of the Tory government in minimizing provincial rights and powers and centralizing them at Ottawa. The second, their lamentable mal-administration of North West affairs.

Since his accession to office in 1878, Sir John has waged an incessant warfare upon provincial rights. His aim seems to have been to so strip them of all power and influence as to make Ottawa the supreme head and fountain of government and patronage from one end of the Dominion to the other. Instance the appointing of Returning officers in Dominion elections—a clear usurpation of provincial rights. Thus they can appoint their friends to these offices and have the influence due to their being their appointees. Then take their Franchise Act, by the provisions of which the making of the electors' lists is taken from appointees of the people in the various municipalities, counties and ridings of the different provinces, and vested in revising officers appointed by the Government at Ottawa. This too entailed an enormous expense. Last session three hundred thousand dollars were voted on account of the Franchise Act for the year. These two acts affect the whole Dominion. Ontario has had occasion, however, to feel more of the effects of this centralizing influence than any other province in the Dominion. She has been made a special object of attack. This may be due partly to the bitter hatred Sir John entertains for that honorable man and distinguished statesman, the Hon. Mr. Mowatt, who has so successfully thwarted him in his repeated attempts to break down provincial autonomy.

The Escheats' case, so called, is another instance in point. The

facts briefly stated are as follows :—Andrew F. Mercer, of Toronto, died intestate on the 13th of June, 1871, and without leaving any heirs or next of kin. His estate having escheated to the Crown, as *ultimus heres*, the Attorney General of Ontario claimed the property should go to the Crown, as represented by the Province, and to that end filed an information in the Court of Chancery on behalf of the Crown, to recover possession from certain parties a price of land in the city of Toronto, part of the real estate of the intestate. The parties in possession appeared and demurred to the bill for want of equity. The Vice Chancellor overruled the demurrer and the Court of Appeal for Ontario unanimously affirmed the judgment of the Vice Chancellor. Sir John intervened and claimed the property should go to the Crown as represented by the Dominion. He supported litigation, at the expense of the Dominion, and the case was carried on appeal to the Privy Council. That tribunal decided that escheated property should revert to the Province, under section 109 of the British North America Act.

Mr. Mowatt scored a triumph for provincial rights to the infinite chagrin of his wily antagonist.

In this connection I will next proceed to consider the case of the Streams' Bill. This case involves the extent to which disallowance of Provincial legislation may be exercised by the Dominion Government. The facts briefly told are these :—A Mr. McLaren owned the fee of a tract of land in Ontario, through which flowed a small stream called the Mississippi, a tributary of the Ottawa. Mr. McLaren had expended a large amount in rendering it floatable for timber by deepening and widening the channel, by the erection of a dam and constructing sluice ways. Mr. Caldwell, who owned timber lands above, claimed the right to float his timber and logs down the stream upon making compensation to the owner of the river-bed for his improvements. This assumed right was denied. Mr. McLaren contended that on a true construction of the Ontario Statutes Caldwell had no right to the uses of the stream. The Ontario Legislature intervened and passed an act interpreting and declaring the meaning of the older statute, and giving to a riparian proprietor above the right to use the stream for floatable timber upon paying a fair compensation

for improvements made by a proprietor below. It was claimed this power was within the scope of Provincial legislation, it being a matter affecting property and civil rights, and not pretending to touch streams in other provinces, and not affecting any Dominion interest whatever. Sir John Macdonald claimed the Local Legislature misinterpreted the older act, and had no power to legislate as it had done. That in fine it was robbery of the owner of the stream. The Dominion Cabinet disallowed the Act. The Provincial Legislature enacted it a second time. The Dominion Cabinet again gave it quietus by disallowance. For a third time the Local Legislature passed, and for a third time the Dominion Cabinet disallowed it. By this time a case, which had been brought to test the validity of the statute, had reached the Privy Council, and then it was finally decided the interpretation of the Local Legislature was right, and that logs and timber could be floated down the stream upon making fair compensation to the owner of the bed channel for any improvements he had made upon it.

This was evidently the most serious assault ever made by Sir John upon Provincial self-government. In its decision was involved the question of our local liberties. It settled a most important question and defined the limits within which Dominion disallowance of Provincial legislation was exercisable. All true friends of liberty and good government hailed with delight the discomfiture of this determined assailant upon local rights.

We next pass to a consideration of the Liquor License Case, another instance of an attempt to assume administrative control and denude the Local Legislatures of their long unquestioned powers. For years and years the right of the Provinces to pass license laws remained unchallenged. At length Sir John Macdonald, in his persistent attempts at centralization, essayed to usurp this right. The Crooks Act, so called, was passed by the Ontario Legislature in 1877, making provision in the nature of police or municipal regulations of a merely local character for the sale of liquors and the good government of taverns and granting licenses therefor. Sir John Macdonald claimed that this legislation interfered with the general regulation of trade or commerce and declared the Crooks Act unconstitutional. In 1883 he passed the McCarthy Act, taking the licensing power from the Local

Legislature and placing it in the Dominion Parliament. The effect was to throw the liquor traffic into utter confusion in the various Provinces, open wide the flood gates of litigation and increase beyond parallel the number of drinking places. Meantime the case of *The Queen against Hodge* and finally *Hodge against The Queen* was passing with halting steps and slow stages through the Courts until finally the Privy Council affirmed the validity of the Crooks Act. Thus another attempt to impair legislative independence was happily checkmated by that fearless champion of Provincial rights, the Honorable Mr. Mowatt. Notwithstanding the Privy Council decided the law he had called waste paper good and valid, Sir John at first refused to abandon the McCarthy Act. Finally yielding to the pressure of public opinion, he consented to its suspension until a decision could be reached by the Privy Council. At length this last Court of Appeal, at great cost to the taxpayers of this Dominion, decided that the much vaunted McCarthy Act, which he placed on the Dominion Statutes, was not worth the paper it was written on. The Government has been compelled to return the fines illegally imposed, and the taxpayers in addition to this saddled with the expense of remunerating a host of officials appointed to enforce and carry out the Act, and the costs of litigation through the Courts to the final Court of Appeal, a sum on the whole amounting to about three hundred thousand dollars. Such again was the fate of an unwarrantable attack upon Provincial Autonomy.

The last instance to which I shall refer along the line of this part of my argument was the shameless attempt made to wrest from Ontario a large and valuable part of her territory in the north and western portions of the Province and also of her title to the land, timber and minerals included therein. After the requisition of Rupert's land and the North West Territory a dispute arose as to the proper boundary between Ontario and the Dominion. Ontario claimed the western boundary was west of the Lake of the Woods and between it and the Albany River. On the part of the Dominion Government it was contended, the true boundary was at a point east of Point Arthur. This vexed question continued to be a fruitful subject of dispute down to 1874; when both Governments concurred in referring it to three arbitrators. Orders

in Council were passed by the respective Governments to obtain such legislation as would give effect to the decision of the arbitrators. In 1878 the arbitrators presented their unanimous award in favor of the contention of Ontario. Sir Francis Hincks in referring to it used the following words:—"We arrived at the conclusion we did after a careful study by each arbitrator of the evidence in the case, and without previous consultation or communication of any kind with one another. The only questions of doubt were decided in favor of the Dominion." Chief Justice Harrison, wrote:—"There never was an award made in a matter of such importance that is so little open to honest criticism."

Ontario, in the following year, passed the necessary legislation to give the award effect. Sir John Macdonald refused on the part of his Government to be bound by the award, an act clearly in defiance of constitutional usage. Not only did Sir John repudiate the award, but in 1881 passed an Act to extend the boundaries of Manitoba eastward to the boundary of Ontario, thus involving the two Provinces in the dispute. Then ensued a series of aggressions and reprisals which threatened to break out into open violence. In 1883 the Prairie Province attempted to seize the disputed territory. Ontario resisted the encroachment. A field battery was ordered by the Dominion Government to the front to aid the Manitoba Government in asserting its claims. Ontario, rather than become a party to such an unwarrantable vindication of her rights, for the time being, receded from her position and sought a peaceable solution of the difficulty. After negotiation it was finally agreed that the question should be left to the decision of the Privy Council. In 1884 the Privy Council decided in favor of the claim of Ontario and settled the boundary where the arbitrators had fixed it in 1878. Although Sir John could not refuse to be bound by the decision as to the boundary, he contended the Indian title had not been extinguished, and Ontario should not cut a single stick of timber on the disputed territory, nor extract from its mines a single ounce of ore. He at once proceeded to award his henchmen and partizans, both in and out of Parliament, by parcelling out among them timber limits and mineral areas in the territory decided by the Privy Council to belong to Ontario. And to-day the Dominion Government is furnishing the means

and employing counsel to assist the Saint Catherine's Milling Company in resisting the claims of Ontario to collect dues on timber cut on this her rightful territory. Not only has Ontario expended large sums of money in withstanding these encroachments, but she is compelled to contribute her share out of the Dominion exchequer of the legal expenses incurred in despoiling her territory.

I think I have made good by proof the charge that Sir John Macdonald is the open, avowed and persistent supporter of the principle of centralization, and would, if not checked, so minimize Provincial and local powers as to make Ottawa the fountain and source from which would emanate all influence and patronage. In sharp contrast stands out in bold relief the policy of the great leader of the Liberal party—to preserve local autonomy and leave as much power in the hands of the people as is consistent with good government—not to circumscribe the rights of the local legislatures, but rather to amplify them as far as possible without straining the bonds of the Federal principle.

I next proceed to consider the charge of maladministration in the North West. In a speech delivered by the Hon. Mr. White, Minister of the Interior, in St. John during the month of October last, he passed lightly over the North West troubles. To have heard him you would scarcely think an uprising had occurred there; that whatever little unpleasantness had arisen was attributable to, or had its origin in, the connivance of the Liberals, and that in some mysterious way all these difficulties were traceable to their instigation. This, however, was more hinted at than expressed. He further claimed that the alleged grievances of the Metis were groundless, or if any existed they were of such a frivolous character as scarcely to merit passing notice. I grant you they may have seemed frivolous to Cabinet ministers, who, with lavish hand, were distributing immense tracts of lands to great railway magnates, and vast territories to Colonization Companies; yet in the eyes of the poor half-breed his claim of scrip for a quarter section was as sacred a thing as the rights of the wealthy and influential, for it was his all. What, then, were the alleged grievances of the Metis, and did they seek their redress by and through constitutional means? They were two-fold. They, the half-

breeds of the North West territories, demanded the same rights should be accorded them as had been the half-breeds of Manitoba. The Dominion Parliament, by an act passed in 1870, in lieu of the extinguishment of the Indian Title (the half-breeds being descendants of Indians) appropriated one million four hundred thousand acres of ungranted lands in Manitoba for the benefit of the families of the half-breed residents, and the children of the half-breed heads of families residing in the Province, the same to be granted in such mode, and on such conditions, as to settlement and otherwise as the Governor-General in Council might from time to time determine.

By an Act passed in 1879 the Dominion Parliament delegated the following powers to the Governor-in-Council :—

“To satisfy any claims existing in connection with the extinguishment of the Indian title, preferred by half-breeds resident in the North West Territories outside of the limits of Manitoba, on the fifteenth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, by granting land to such persons, to such extent and on such terms and conditions as may seem expedient.”

Here there was as clear a recognition of the rights of the half-breeds dwelling on the banks of the Saskatchewan, in the North West Territories, to scrip for land as had been accorded to the half-breeds in Manitoba. Several of the half-breeds of the North West had been residents of Manitoba and their claim for scrip, they contended, was doubly strong. The other alleged grievance was as to the mode of survey adopted and enforced by the Government, that is to say, the block or section system, thus throwing into confusion the customary mode of settlement adopted by the Metis, with narrow river fronts ten chains wide and two miles long. These were the principal in their catalogue of grievances. For several long years they carried on a peaceful agitation for a redress of their grievances. They assembled and passed resolutions. They petitioned and memorialized the Government; but their's was the voice of those crying in the wilderness. The justice of their claims was recognized and urged upon the consideration of the Government by gentlemen of high official standing, who had a personal knowledge of the state of affairs that obtained in the North West; by the North West Council, by Archbishop Tache, Bishop McLean and many others. The sound of warning

was unheeded. The plaint of the oppressed awakened no response.

Col. Dennis, Deputy Minister of the Interior, in a memorandum addressed to Sir John Macdonald, the 20th day of December, 1878, said :—

"The undersigned respectfully submits to the Minister that it is expedient, with as little delay as possible, to deal with the claims to consideration preferred by the half-breeds of the North West Territories."

"Some uneasiness is felt by the half-breed element in the Territories in consequence of no steps having yet been taken towards the recognition of the demands put forward on their behalf. It must be freely admitted they have a claim to favorable consideration; and the question is—how is that claim to be satisfied, so as to benefit the half-breeds, and, at the same time, benefit the country?"

In a letter addressed by Archbishop Tache to Col. Dennis, the 29th of January, 1879, this distinguished Prelate wrote :—

"It must be freely admitted that the half-breeds of the North West have a claim to favorable consideration. Great uneasiness is felt by them in consequence of no steps having yet been taken in their behalf. A liberal policy on the part of the Government would attract to its side a moral and physical power, which the present critical relations of the various tribes of Indians towards each other, and towards the Government, would prove of the greatest value to the Dominion. On the other hand, the half-breed element, if dissatisfied, would turn a standing menace to the peace and prosperity of the Territories. There is no doubt that the state of affairs in the Territories in relation to the Indians and half-breeds is calling for the serious consideration of the Government, and measures should be adopted to cultivate and maintain relations with the half-breed population calculated to attach them to us."

Bishop McLean, the Anglican Bishop of the Saskatchewan Diocese, under date of the 18th of January, 1879, wrote the Deputy Minister of the Interior in these terms :—

"The experience of all the years I have lived in the North West, points to the conclusion that the Indian has a tendency, in all his dealings with the white man, to consult and largely to be guided by the opinion of the half-breed. If, therefore, you have the whole half-breed element (to use the language of your remarks) 'in sympathy with the Government in dealing with the plain tribes of Indians,' I would express a very hearty conviction in the conclusion that you draw, viz., 'that we should attract to our side a moral power, which in the present critical relations of the various tribes of Indians towards each other and towards the Government, would prove of the greatest value to the Dominion.'"

On the 7th of June, 1881, a memorial was forwarded the Ottawa Government by Lawrence Clarke, a member of the North West Council, extracts from which are couched in the following language :—

"That a feeling of dissatisfaction and discontent exists among the Half-breed element in the North-west Territories."

"That the Half-breeds have always been recognized as possessing rights in the same soil, subject to which the Dominion accepted the transfer of the Territories, and while ample provision has been made for those resident in Manitoba on the 15th July, 1870, nothing, so far, has been done towards extinguishing that portion of the Indian title to lands in the Territories outside of the Province of Manitoba, as originally formed by the Act of 1870."

"That the general feeling of the community is that these Half-breeds, possessing even rights with those who have already received scrip or grants of land in Manitoba, have not had that measure of justice meted out to them to which, by the terms of the surrender, they were entitled."

Wearied out with petitioning, and no steps having been taken by a culpable ministry to grant their reasonable requests, the poor people of Saint Albert collected six hundred dollars, and sent a delegation to Ottawa to press their claims in person upon the consideration of the Government. They went, they saw, but did not conquer a recognition of their just demands. Finally, in despair, they turned their eyes to Louis Riel and sought his presence—that by a peaceful agitation, under his leadership, they might attain justice. In June, 1884, a delegation of four—Gabriel Dumont, Isbister, Ouilette and Dumas—travelled seven hundred miles on foot into Montana to supplicate the aid of Riel in their extremity. Does it stand within the bounds of belief that men would make such sacrifices simply for some imaginary or frivolous grievance? The following is an extract from the reply of Riel to the request of the delegation:—

"Considering, then, that my interests are identical with yours, I accept your very kind invitation, and will go and spend some months amongst you, in the hope that by petitioning the Government we will obtain the redress of all our grievances. I go with you, but I come back in September."

"I have the honor to be, gentlemen delegates,

"Your humble servant,

"LOUIS RIEL."

The following, from the report of the delegates, shows the intention with which the aid of Riel was sought:—

"Mr. Riel comes here to help us, without any pretension. He hopes that before long the people of the North West will be perfectly united, and, that the Government will very soon do justice to all."

"The speeches of Mr. Riel inspire us with the greatest confidence, because his instructions are to help us; but while helping us he does not want, in the slightest degree, to create needless difficulties to the Government."

"We have the honor to be, gentlemen, your most humble servants and delegates,

"GABRIEL DUMONT."

The appeal made by these poor people to the magnanimity of the Government is most pathetic and stamps the conduct of the latter as criminal to a degree. The following is from the petition of Gabriel Dumont and forty-two others, afterwards insurgents, sent to Sir John, the 4th of September, 1882:—

"In our anxiety, we appeal to your spirit of justice as Minister of the Interior and leader of the Government and we implore you to at once reassure us by giving orders so that we shall not be troubled on our lands, and that the Government will grant us the privilege of considering us as occupants of even sections, since we occupy those lands in good faith; and having occupied this country since such a long time as masters, and having so often defended it against the Indians at the price of our blood, we think that it is not asking too much that the Government give us the right of occupying peacefully our lands, and that it should make some exceptions to its regulations, by granting gratuitously lands to the North West half-breeds. We further desire that the Government should give orders to have the lands surveyed along the river ten chains wide by two miles long: it is the old custom of this country to distribute land in this manner, and thus it would enable us to recognize the limits of our respective lands."

"Monsieur the Minister, we hope that you will favorably receive this petition which we send you, and that we shall know your decision as soon as possible. This is our anxious wish, while praying the Almighty to protect you and keep you at the head of this great country of Canada, which you govern with so much wisdom."

On the 22nd of March, 1884, Mr. Cameron moved in Parliament the following resolution:—

"This House do resolve itself into a committee of the whole, to consider of the condition, complaints and demands of Manitoba and the North West Territories with a view to devise means for remedying any well-founded grievances and complying with any reasonable demands."

The following is the peroration of Mr. Charleton's speech on moving the above resolution:—

"I say it is a fair and just thing, and that they should get it, and that at once. Now, Sir, all these facts must convince you beyond peradventure that there is a feeling of discontent, a feeling of dissatisfaction, a feeling of unrest, in both Manitoba and the North West Territories. And further, that, so far as we know, at all events the first step has not been taken by this Government to redress these wrongs and remove these grievances. * * * Sir, we ought not to forget that England lost one empire by the disregard of just such claims as these. Let us take care lest by ignoring these claims and trifling with these demands we do not jeopardize the existence of our new Empire in the Great North West."

This resolution was ruled down by the Ministry and their solid phalanx of followers.

It was known to the Government at Ottawa that Riel was in the country in the summer and autumn of 1884 and that he was holding meetings among the Metis to obtain by peaceable means a

removal of their long standing grievances. Yet not one move did they make, not one step did they take, after all these warnings, all these protests, to seek and do justice even at the eleventh hour. The petitions and memorials of the half-breeds, dust covered, were left to moulder, unanswered, in the pigeon holes of the office of the Department of the Interior. Was culpability ever known to surpass this? At length the explosion came and then the Ministry acted with promptitude. A commission was at once appointed to proceed with all possible despatch to the North West and enquire of and redress the grievances of the insurgents. Seventeen hundred claims out of a population of about five thousand were recognized and redressed by the commission. And yet Mr. White would insult your intelligence by saying they had no grievances.

The organ of the Government, the *Toronto Mail*, before it was repudiated, in its issue of the 8th of July, 1885, thus comments upon the injustice done the half-breeds:—

"Had they had votes, like white men, or if, like the Indians, they had been numerous enough to command respect and overawe red-tape, without doubt the wheels of the office would have revolved for them; but being only half-breeds, they were PUT OFF WITH AN ETERNAL PROMISE, UNTIL PATIENCE CEASED TO BE A VIRTUE."

"We repeat again that the departmental system under which such CALLOUS AND CRUEL NEGLECT OF THE RIGHTS OF A PORTION OF THE COMMUNITY WAS POSSIBLE, WAS WRONG, AND SHOULD BE CENSURED."

"It has never been denied by the *Mail* that the *Metis* had good ground for grievances"

"The Department for years and years steadily refused to move in the matter."

Principal Grant, a strong Conservative, and a devoted follower of Sir John, in speaking to the resolution of the Presbyterian Assembly made use of the following language:—

Principal Grant:—"We are doing a very solemn act, and we should all deliberately endorse or approve of this motion by all rising in attestation of our own feelings on the subject. I feel that we have been guilty of a national sin, and if we do not repent we will be punished as a nation, and a worse thing will come upon us if we do not mend our doings."

I ask, has the condemnation of the Government not been proved beyond a peradventure? During seven years something like seventy petitions and memorials were sent forward to the Government at Ottawa, warning, beseeching and entreating for a simple recognition of the rights of these people, and not one single, well-directed, effort was put forth all this time by them to remedy

these grievances. Only actual rebellion aroused them from their inveterate apathy and awakened them to a sense of their cruel and callous neglect. All the fearful consequences of the rebellion, the loss of two hundred lives, and the expenditure of eight million dollars of our money in its suppression, are chargeable to their criminal indifference. The blood-guiltiness rests where impartial history will place it—at the door of an incapable and guilty ministry. Do not, however, understand me to justify armed rebellion. The guilt of the ministry will not lessen the crime of the insurgents, nor will the guilt of the Metis in resorting to arms exculpate a delinquent ministry. They (the Metis) should have continued to agitate, through constitutional means, for a redress of their grievances, trusting to other times and other men to right their wrongs and do them the justice so long denied.

In the years to come, when the mists of passion and prejudice, engendered by party strife shall have been dissipated, and when all the facts of the North West Rebellion shall have been brought to light, its recital will constitute one of the darkest chapters in Canadian history.

Such, in fine, are some of the issues submitted to the people of this Dominion and such, in part, the record of the Government on which an appeal is being made for a renewal of public confidence. The principles of the great liberal party are well known and thoroughly appreciated, I trust, by the masses generally. Our honored leader, the Hon. Edward Blake, has sketched an outline of the policy he will adopt if entrusted with power. Briefly summarized it is—to modify the tariff so as to make an adjustment worthy the name—to remove the duties on the prime necessities of life—to admit free raw materials imported for manufacturing purposes—to shift the incidence of taxation where it now presses unduly upon the poorer and laboring classes and cause it to rest, where it can more easily be borne, upon the more wealthy—to seek by all possible means reciprocal trade relations with the sixty millions of people to the south of us—to keep by rigid economy in the public departments and retrenchment in all branches of the civil service, our expenditure within the limits of our income—to reform the Senate and extend the Dominion franchise to residential manhood.

suffrage. Such the leaders and such the principles of the two great parties that now divide the State.

It is for you to say, whom you will serve and which follow. Then say, "Under which king, Bezonian? speak, or die!" The immortal bard of Avon has said, "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at flood leads on to fortune." The tide, we believe, has turned and is now setting strong in the direction of Liberalism from one end of this Dominion to the other. Flood tide will doubtless be reached the 22nd of this month. To change the metaphor, we have stormed one after another all the outlying strongholds and are now preparing to level their guns upon the citadel of Conservatism on the banks of the Ottawa for the last grand assault. We have met with reverses in the past, and at times, hoping almost against hope, have felt we were to a certain extent, the leaders and followers of a forlorn cause. In hours of despondency we have felt as if public sentiment were dead and the conscience of the people could not be aroused from an almost hopeless torpor. Yet I cannot believe public sentiment is quite dead, and the conscience of the great mass of the people cannot be touched and aroused. As the prophet of old who sat down under the shade of the juniper tree and bewailed the sad state of his nation, heard, recognized and obeyed the voice of his God, so may we, at this supreme moment of our country's peril, above the din of venal clamor, the rude jostlings of bitter partizanship, and the widespread prevalence of extravagance and corruption, hear, recognize and obey the voice of his and our God, saying, "Arise, do your work. There yet remain seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

